Erin O’Dell

For years parents have been discussing the option of their children attending some form of pre-schooling before kindergarten. Some parents are skeptical of sending their children to school before it becomes necessary. Other parents believe that the early socialization with other kids in the same age group is very beneficial. As of now, preschool is not a mandatory obligation before entering kindergarten. I believe that the issue of mandatory preschool should be dismissed altogether. Preschool should be the parent’s decision, based on the individual child and the fact of whether or not he or she is ready.

Although I do not believe that preschool should be required in order for the child to be permitted to kindergarten, there are many benefits to preschool programs. These programs socially familiarize children with other children in the same age group. Even though preschool is not nearly as involved as kindergarten, kids get to know and understand what a school setting is like. After all, schooling is a major part of life for all kids. Most kids that attend some type of pre-schooling also become more comfortable with being away from their parent’s at a younger age. Although it might be tough the first few times, the children learn to become more independent. The children will learn how to listen, behave, and communicate appropriately. The basic skills that are taught in preschool can have a positive influence on the child’s future academics and will help him or her to gain experience that can be used later in life.

Along with advantages, there are also disadvantages to pre-schooling. Many parents raise the question, “Is preschool truly necessary?” Although many children gain early exposure to a school setting by attending preschool, some people are coming to find that early exposure can also lead to early “burnout.” According to Patti Greenberg Wollman, “society is rushing kids into adulthood these days,” this is not necessary. Children are obligated to attend kindergarten in some form at age five, and from then on, schooling is carried out for at least twelve plus years. Another disadvantage to pre-schooling is unavailable individual attention. Studies are showing that too much group exposure is taking away from the individual attention that young children still need. As opposed to half-day kindergartens, preschool usually lasts all day. And although preschool is usually not every day of the week, the long days can be exhausting for young children. Parents can also become inconvenienced if there are holidays or if preschool is canceled. Quick arrangements need to be made if the parents need to be to work. If children are not truly learning and benefitting from preschool, it should not be made mandatory.

It should be up to the parents to decide if their children should attend preschool. Each child is different and has individual needs. Pre-schooling can be a very beneficial thing for young children to be involved in, however I do not believe that it should be made mandatory for everyone before beginning kindergarten.